

CONDEMNING THE RECENT ATTACKS AGAINST THE STATE OF ISRAEL

SPEECH OF

HON. JIM RAMSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Mr. RAMSTAD. Madam Speaker, I rise today as a strong and consistent supporter of Israel to urge my colleagues to pass H. Res. 921.

This important resolution condemns the recent attacks on Israel by the Hamas and Hezbollah terrorist groups and expresses continued U.S. support for the right of Israel to defend itself.

The State of Israel was created in 1948, and the United States was the first country to formally recognize its right to exist. Since that time, Israel has been one of our strongest allies in the world and a glimmer of hope in the Middle East as the only developed democracy in a region that has known too much war, too much terror and too much violence.

Israel consistently stands shoulder to shoulder with the U.S. in countering the most dangerous threats we face today, including the use of terror by groups attempting to destabilize moderate regimes and disrupt various peacemaking efforts.

In August 2005, Israel began its withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and gave the Palestinian Authority (PA) the opportunity to prove themselves capable of exercising just and rightful authority over their own people. Since that time, the PA has proven to be ineffective at immobilizing terrorist activities, as shown by Hamas' frequent rocket attacks on Israeli cities and the cross-border ambush that took place only a few weeks ago, which resulted in the deaths of two Israeli soldiers and the kidnapping of another.

In addition, Iran's public declarations calling for both the destruction of the state of Israel and greater development of nuclear arms have produced a dangerous and volatile situation both regionally and globally. As Iran continues to provide weapons and supplies to terrorist groups like Hezbollah, we must allow Israel to continue to take necessary action to protect itself.

This is a critical time for Israel. We must allow Israel to continue its self defense efforts and attempts to prevent terrorist organizations from destroying the Middle East. As Prime Minister Olmert stated in his address to Congress, "[We must] replace the 'Culture of Hate' with an 'Outlook of Hope.'" Hezbollah and Hamas are organizations that have proven to be committed to this "Culture of Hate." Consequently, their removal from the Middle East is essential to instill hope into a region that has seen far too much destruction of innocent life.

Once again, I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

FREEDOM FOR VIRGILIO MANTILLA ARANGO

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2006

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Virgilio Mantilla Arango, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba. Mr. Mantilla Arango is a pro-democracy leader in totalitarian Cuba. Because of his steadfast conviction in human liberty and his constant work to bring freedom to an island enslaved by the nightmare that is the Castro regime, he has been a constant target of the dictatorship.

According to multiple reports, Mr. Mantilla Arango was arrested on March 4, 2002, for peacefully protesting at a provincial hospital. The reports outline how, at the hospital, the group shouted "Long live human rights" and sat on the floor. After 2 years in the gulag, and after a sham trial in April 2004, Human Rights Watch reports that Mr. Mantilla Arango was "sentenced" to 7 years in the totalitarian gulag. The "sentence" included 4 years for his participation in the March 2002 protest and 3 years for continuing to peacefully protest against the nightmare that is the Castro regime during his time in the gulag before his "trial."

The U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices—2005, describes the deplorable conditions in the totalitarian gulag as, "harsh and life threatening." Sadly, this is all too true for Mr. Mantilla Arango. According to reports published on Net For Cuba, Mr. Mantilla Arango has suffered savage beatings by dictatorship thugs for denouncing the tyranny and hanging signs above his bed that say "Down with Fidel" and "We Need Freedom." In July, Mr. Mantilla Arango informed the Cuban Human Rights Foundation that he has been in brutal, solitary confinement since putting on a T-shirt last month that carried the words, "Down with Fidel."

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Mantilla Arango is the face of the real Cuba. No matter how intense the beatings, no matter how remorseless the repression, no matter how inhumane the conditions, he will never relent in his belief that the people of Cuba should be and will be free.

Mr. Speaker, it is as inconceivable as it is unacceptable that, in the 21st century and only 90 miles from our shore, brave men and women are locked in grotesque dungeons because they believe that all people have basic human rights. It is a profound embarrassment for mankind that the world stands by in silence and acquiescence while political prisoners are systematically tortured because of their belief in freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. My colleagues, we must demand the immediate and unconditional release of Virgilio Mantilla Arango and every political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

CONDEMNING THE RECENT ATTACKS AGAINST THE STATE OF ISRAEL

SPEECH OF

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, today the House is considering H. Res. 921, a resolution condemning the recent attacks against the State of Israel.

The resolution focuses on the attacks by Hamas and Hezbollah on Israel and expresses its condolences to all families of innocent victims of the recent violence. While the resolution is not perfect, it does call on the international community to cooperate to bring an end to the violence in the region.

The two sides cannot resolve this by themselves, and it is clear that only a diplomatic track will help to address the widespread unrest in the Middle East. Believing that, I would prefer the resolution would do more to solidify the U.S. as an honest broker in the conflict.

It is unfortunate that while the violence has continued for more than a week now, Secretary of State Rice still has failed to travel to the region. Even further, she has declined to send a special envoy to focus exclusively on the crisis. This is yet one more example of the Bush administration's failure on the foreign policy front.

The administration must become engaged with the international community in pursuing a peaceful and just resolution to this on-going crisis instead of standing by while innocent civilians are killed. President Bush's stubborn involvement in Iraq has made it difficult for the U.S. to focus on this and other conflicts in the region. Instead of bringing parties to the negotiating table, President Bush and Secretary Rice have ignored the region while it has literally gone up in flames.

History has shown that the U.S. is most successful when it supports even-handed, diplomacy-based foreign policy. This can be achieved by supporting and implementing the legislation I introduced earlier this year, SMART—H. Con. Res. 158. SMART steps include:

1. preventing future acts of terrorism by strengthening international institutions and respect for the rule of law;
2. reducing the threat and stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction;
3. addressing the root causes of terrorism;
4. shifting U.S. budget priorities to more effectively meet our national security needs;
5. pursuing to the fullest extent alternatives to war.

Until the Bush administration adopts principles like these in the Middle East, and throughout the world, the cycle of unrest will continue.

Unlike previous congressional acts, SMART strives to achieve a balance of support for all parties and puts the U.S. in the role of a partner for peace in Middle East.

With my constituents and colleagues, I call on the President to dedicate himself fully to the peace process and to guarantee the safety and well-being of all innocent civilians involved in the chaos in the Middle East.

HONORING RAYFER EARL'E
MAINOR, POET LAUREATE

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2006

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to honor a great man and a great artist, poet laureate Rayfer Earl'e Mainor. As our Nation's longest serving poet laureate, and the only current African American poet laureate, Rayfer Earl'e Mainor has shared his soul through his poetry for over 50 years.

It is the responsibility of a poet laureate to uplift and raise the status of poetry in the everyday consciousness of Americans. Since 1969, Rayfer Earl'e Mainor has embodied those ideals and standards.

All too often poetry has ignored the particular aspects and unique history of African Americans. Rayfer Earl'e Mainor's representations and imagery have shaped the way the world now views the African American experience. His poems have allowed us to reexamine and rethink our own views and experiences.

Rayfer Earl'e Mainor has authored several works that have sought to inspire us including: Poems; Poems II; A Tribute to Blackness; The Life and Times of Sister Menefee; Mammoth Melting Sugar; and To Mister or Sarah Jean: A Love Story. Through his craft, Rayfer Earl'e Mainor has enlightened us with the narrative prose of the brutal murder of Emmitt Till, and poetry relaying the 1916 lynching of Jesse Washington. His work has also detailed the reflections and expectations surrounding expectant fatherhood.

It is an honor for me to be able to recognize this outstanding man, artist, and lifelong member of Alpha Phi Alpha. His work and representations have brought reverence to the African American community and his brotherhood at Alpha Phi Alpha. I am fortunate enough to serve with several distinguished men of Alpha Phi Alpha, including: Congressman CHARLES RANGEL, Congressman GREGORY MEEKS, Congressman ROBERT SCOTT, Congressman CHAKA FATTAH, Congressman EMANUEL CLEAVER, Congressman DAVID SCOTT, Congressman DANNY DAVIS, and Congressman AL GREEN. I know that my fellow colleagues and Congressional Black Caucus Members equal the respect and admiration for Mr. Mainor.

I have the highest esteem for Rayfer Earl'e Mainor and his work, and I look forward to many more bright expressions of poetry, prose, and art in the years ahead.

PLEDGE PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2389) to amend title 28, United States Code, with respect to the jurisdiction of Federal courts over certain cases and controversies involving the Pledge of Allegiance:

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 2389, the so-called Pledge Protection Act. H.R. 2389 would strip all Federal courts, including the Supreme Court, of their ability to hear cases involving the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Pledge of Allegiance is a true expression of liberty and justice for all—cornerstones of our great Nation. However, H.R. 2389 would punish those who exercise that freedom. Basic due process demands an independent judicial forum capable of determining Federal constitutional rights. This legislation deprives the Federal courts of their ability to hear cases involving the fundamental free speech rights of students, parents, and other individuals. In our Country, dissenting views are supposed to be valued, allowed and tolerated. To take away this fundamental freedom of expression is to dishonor America and all Americans.

At this time when American soldiers continue to die every day in Iraq, with the Taliban and Al Qaeda making gains in Afghanistan, when millions of Americans are suffering because the minimum wage has not been raised in almost a decade, when millions more lack any health care coverage, and when gas prices are skyrocketing, the Republican majority has decided that the House should instead debate a bill that is unnecessary and, if passed, would only serve to undermine our democracy.

I am not afraid of those Americans who oppose parts of the Pledge having an opportunity to express those views. Healthy, controversial debates and a free society able to challenge the status quo are what make our country so strong and so great. What is scary are those who seek to use bills, such as the one before us today, to advance their ideology at the expense of freedom and liberty. That is something we should all oppose in the strongest terms.

As Members of Congress we owe our constituents better. I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on H.R. 2389.

HONORING LOUIS "BOTCH"
TONELLA NAPA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2006

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the achievements of Louis "Botch" Tonella on the occasion of his recognition as the Napa County Farm Bureau's Agriculturalist of the Year for 2006.

Mr. Tonella has been an active participant in the remarkable transformation of the Napa Valley into the world's premier wine-growing region. His career in vineyards started at a young age when he went to work at the Ponti-Beaulieu Vineyards, helping tend vines and trimming the orchards. During the difficult years of the Great Depression, he and a friend opened a general store in Rutherford to serve the needs of local farms and families. In 1949 Mr. Tonella purchased a vineyard, which he owned and operated for half a century before passing control to his son. Working among the vines beside his employees during the harvests, Botch was known for being a hard

worker and team player. He drove his tractor through the vineyards a final time in 1997, at the age of 85.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to his achievement as a vineyard owner, we should acknowledge Mr. Tonella's role as a member and leader of the community in the Napa Valley. He has performed the invaluable service of a volunteer fire fighter for the Rutherford Fire Department, including 10 years as the fire chief. He was also a founding member of the Sunny St. Helena Co-op Winery and an active participant in the Farm Bureau of Napa County for many years.

Mr. Tonella's life has been blessed by the company of his wife of 70 years, Eda Villa. His son Raymond now owns the Tonella vineyards, which today includes the Ponti vineyards Mr. Tonella worked on during his first job in the 1920s. The arrival of his first great-grandchild earlier this year marks another welcome addition to the Tonella family.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate at this time that we recognize Louis "Botch" Tonella for his lifetime of dedication, hard work and success in the vineyards of the Napa Valley and his leadership as a member of numerous organizations in our community.

CONGRATULATING ELLICOTT CITY
AND COLUMBIA, MARYLAND FOR
BEING NAMED ONE OF THE
"BEST PLACES TO LIVE" IN
AMERICA BY MONEY MAGAZINE

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2006

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ellicott City and Columbia, Maryland located in beautiful Howard County which is part of my district, the 7th District of Maryland, for placing 4th on Money Magazine's "Best Places to Live" 2006 list.

This list recognizes what we in Maryland have known for years: that Ellicott City and Columbia provide the best of both worlds—an economy in which parents and children can thrive and a quality of life that allows them to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Located in the corridor between Baltimore, Maryland, and Washington, DC, the area that became known as Ellicott City was a tobacco outpost until the Ellicott brothers turned it into the flour-milling capital of the 1700s. Two centuries later, Columbia grew from the vision of developer Jim Rouse, who created the town as an alternative to the epidemic of boring suburbs. Only 5 miles apart and now called home by 160,000 Marylanders, these two towns provide an active and charming downtown, a major music venue, a 30,000 square foot arts center, an impressive mall, and over 4,500 acres of park space. The Money Magazine recognition stands as a testament to the fine administration of the county and local governments and to the residents' long-standing commitment to active community involvement—working together to ensure the highest quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, Ellicott City and Columbia are not just great places to play and enjoy life, they are also excellent places to work and attend school. About one-third of these residents work at local businesses, at one of the national corporations headquartered there, or at